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AUTHOR Faraday, Sally; Harris, Richard
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INSTITUTION Further Education Unit, London (England).; Skill: National Bureau of Students with Disabilities, London (England).; Training Agency, London (England).
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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning strategies are the subject of this document, one of 9 modules in an 11-unit resource pack designed to help trainers and postsecondary and continuing education staff meet the needs of special needs students in Great Britain. Having completed the module, staff should be able to: (1) recognize the value of activity and variety in assisting learning; (2) select and implement methods appropriate for learners' individual needs; and (3) plan a learning program relevant to stated objectives incorporating variety in learning activities, resources, and methods of organization. Following an introduction, the first of four instructional sections deals with the benefits of activity and variety, on the premise that special needs learners are likely to be more responsive to learning by doing than simply listening to lectures. Section 2 explains how space, time, and people are important in the management of learning. Section 3 examines a range of teaching methods, including brainstorming, buzz groups, discussion, experiential learning, projects, simulation, and task analysis. Section 4 lists the factors to be considered in planning and preparing a session, i.e., needs of the learners, goals, objectives, content, methods, resources, student assessment, and session evaluation. Fifteen exercises are included in the module. (CML)

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LEARNING SUPPORT

TRAINING/
TEACHING AND
LEARNING
STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

Learning arises from activity, and training/teaching approaches are the key to active learning. The use of a wide variety of methods allows different learning styles to flourish and this is essential in enabling people with special needs to learn in the most effective way for them. Variety arises from different ways of organising the learning activities, resources and environment. Clearly, choosing the most appropriate methods for meeting individual needs leads to successful learning.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How can you help learners to learn?
- How will you provide activity and variety to aid learning?
- How will you organise resources and environment to ensure active learning?
- What methods will you use?

AIMS

- To identify a variety of possible approaches to training/teaching and learning.
- To consider their application in meeting the individual needs of learners.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this element you should be able to:

- recognise the value of activity and variety in assisting learning;
- list training/teaching methods appropriate to learners' individual needs;
- select and apply appropriate methods to suit individual learning needs;
- plan a learning programme relevant to stated objectives incorporating variety in learning activities, resources and methods of organisation.

SOME GENERAL POINTS ABOUT TRAINING/TEACHING

What is involved in the detailed implementation of plans?



What is required to be effective in this role?

Trainers and teachers have the crucial role to play in the translation process.

Four features are important:

- Attitudes – having a positive approach towards learners and their needs
- Knowledge – of learners' needs and interests
 - of appropriate methods and approaches to enable learners to learn
 - of content

SIGNPOST

Introductory Element

SIGNPOST

Element 3. Devising Individual Learning Programmes

SIGNPOST

Element 5. Training/
Teaching and Learning
Strategies – Section 3

SIGNPOST

Element 5. Training/
Teaching and Learning
Strategies – Sections 2 and
3

SIGNPOST

Element 6. Design and
Adaptation of Learning
Materials

- Resources – using self, learners and the whole environment, designing and adapting materials to meet individual needs and interests.

- Imagination – finding interesting ways of using knowledge and resources to promote learning.

These features all relate to supporting learners.



Remember that you are planning and preparing for:

- the delivery of your overall part of the programme;
- the individual sessions which make it up.

It is the application of appropriate attitudes, knowledge, resources and imagination which will make learning successful. Two key features of this are variety and activity.

Variety

Trainees and students have different styles of learning, therefore no single approach on its own will satisfy their needs. This applies equally to the overall programme and any individual session within it.

Activity

Much current training and educational practice is based on the notion that trainees and students learn most effectively by being actively involved in learning. The process of experience ('doing something'), followed by reflection ('thinking about what has been done'), leads to learning.

These two features are now explored in more detail in Section 1.

I. ACTIVITY AND VARIETY



EXERCISE I. EXPLORING ACTIVITY AND VARIETY (i)

Small group activity

Activity and variety are widely acknowledged as being important features of the learning process. This exercise provides you with an opportunity to explore them.

Advance preparation

You will need sufficient copies of the sheets, 'Diary of Chris Jones' and 'The options – a discussion'.

Methods

1. Read the extract from the Diary of Chris Jones (Stimulus Sheet 1).
2. Discuss options 1 – 5 (Stimulus Sheet 2).
3. Select one and give your reasons for doing so.
4. Compare your choice with the comments on the sheet 'The options – a discussion'.
5. Discuss any points which emerge.

STIMULUS SHEET I. DIARY OF CHRIS JONES, STAFF MEMBER (EXTRACT)

Arrived 8.55 in staff room. Actually got to work at 8.35. Delay due to getting involved in 'earnest debate' with Head of Centre over best position in which to leave my car. Apparently the 'goods delivery' space means what it says! Couldn't find my file. That's what I must have spilt coffee on at home. All deposits withdrawn from resources bank. Arrived at room 9.05. The group of students waiting attentively, (well, awake – just) for the session to start. I have nothing; no video, no equipment, only myself. What do I do?

1. Talk about the topic until 10.30 break?
2. Talk about the topic and get the learners to write some notes in their files (if they have them)?
3. Talk about the topic for 20 minutes, then organise the learners into groups and let them talk about it for an hour?
4. Talk about the topic for 10 minutes, put the main points on the chalkboard, let the learners talk then record their points. Proceed in the same cycle, developing the subject each time?
5. Explore the meaning of 'goods delivery' spaces and their relevance to economic development?

STIMULUS SHEET 2. THE OPTIONS – A DISCUSSION

How successful is each option likely to be?

1. Even if you are Billy Connelly or Victoria Wood, you are unlikely to hold the learners' attention. Little, if any, learning will take place since all learners have a limited span of attention. For many learners with special needs this is very short.
2. Better than option 1, but learners will become bored very quickly. Can they all take notes?
3. Could be successful, but it hasn't been planned. Could also be a disaster. Much depends on the instructions for discussion and the possession of appropriate skills by the learner to enter into discussion. Do they know enough about the topic? Are they able to listen, take turns, form ideas, build on them?
4. The best option. Learners are involved. There is variety of activity. There is feedback. There is frequent teacher or trainer involvement. You can adjust the focus to meet learners' interests.
5. Tempting perhaps, but ...

Why is option 4 most appropriate?

The key is the activity and variety which the approach incorporates.

WHY ACTIVITY?

Chinese proverb

I hear and I forget

I see and I remember

I do and I understand.

There is a wealth of evidence available to support the active learning approach. (Indeed the philosophy now underpins many course frameworks and programmes, e.g. BTEC, CPVE and YTS.)

SIGNPOST

Element 2, Curriculum/
Training Programme
Design and Evaluation
Strategies—Design
principles.

All learners, and particularly those with special needs, are likely to be more responsive to 'doing' than simply 'listening'. It enables them to show, both to themselves and to others, that they have learned. The implications are that the learners are active during a learning session; making something, arguing, writing. This can be on either a group or an individual basis, with the learners involved in making decisions about what they learn, when. This means negotiation of the learning programme and a flexible response from staff.

From this we cannot identify any particular methods because they must be negotiated to serve the interests of both the teacher and the learner. Satisfying the interests of both will always be a compromise between 'what the learners are interested in' and 'what is in the learners' interest'. The compromise is the result of negotiation between both parties.

WHY VARIETY?

SIGNPOST

Introductory Element

SIGNPOST

Element 2, Curriculum/
Training Programme
Design and Evaluation
Strategies

SIGNPOST

Element 3, Devising
Individual Learning
Programmes

However closely you identify the needs and interests of learners you cannot be certain of precisely how they learn. Learning styles vary considerably. Therefore by offering a variety of approaches to learning you can serve the interests of most learners.

Variety within a learning session also aids response. You may have already seen in Element 3, **Devising Individual Learning Programmes** that the attention span for some learners with special needs is fairly short. You can maintain interest and involvement through providing new and different ways of approaching the same theme or topic.

EXERCISE 2. EXPLORING ACTIVITY AND VARIETY (ii)

Small group activity

It is important to recognise that activity and variety apply to both you and to the learner. This exercise explores the role which learners play in a planned session and the need to plan for them.

1. Read the outline plan for a learning session (Stimulus Sheet 3).
2. Discuss and write down:
 - a) what is good about the session
 - b) what is bad about the session
3. Read the 'Good points/bad points' follow-up sheet (Stimulus Sheet 4).
4. Complete the 'Learner activity sheet' (Stimulus Sheet 5).
5. Compare your comments with those on the completed 'Learner activity sheet' provided.

Guidelines for facilitators

This activity should be undertaken in three stages:

1. Provide group members with the sheet 'Outline plan for learning session'. The group then undertakes points 1 and 2 of the exercise. Discussion.
2. Provide group members with the 'Good points/bad points' sheet. The group then reads the sheet and completes the 'Learner activity list'. Point 3. Discussion.
3. Provide group members with the 'Learner activity sheet' (completed). Group members compare this with their lists and discuss the issues raised.

STIMULUS SHEET 3. OUTLINE PLAN FOR LEARNING SESSION

10.00 Introduction	
10.05 Recap on previous session	Question and answer
10.10 Introduction to new topic	Talk
10.25 Development of topic	Slides, Q and A
10.40 Case-studies	Tape recorder, Q and A
11.00 Some recent developments	Video
11.20 Go over main points of topic	Talk, Q and A
11.30 End	

STIMULUS SHEET 4. GOOD POINTS/BAD POINTS

Good points

1. Planned.
2. Frequent change of activity
3. Variety of audio/visual aids
4. Topic is linked to previous and next session.

Bad points

Before looking at these look back at the plan and write down learner activity next to the times indicated below.

Learner activity

10.00

10.05

10.10

10.25

10.40

11.00

11.20

11.30

STIMULUS SHEET 5. LEARNER ACTIVITY SHEET (COMPLETED)

Learner activity

10.00 Learners quiet or talking (or talking to one another).

10.05 One or two learners answering.

10.10 Learners listening (or not).

10.25 Learners looking and responding (or dozing in the blackout).

10.40 Listening again.

11.00 Watching and listening to the programme or thinking about what is on TV tonight.

11.20 Listening or getting things together for. . .

11.30 Quick exit.

Despite the variety of stimuli the session may achieve very little. The learners are passive not active. They are allowed to respond but not generate. Learning opportunities are limited.

CONCLUSIONS

From the exercise you have just undertaken several issues emerge.

You need to:

- manage the learning rather than be the fount of knowledge;
- know what methods are available to you;
- select and apply those methods which will be most effective in fulfilling the learning objectives for learners with special needs.

Each of these is now looked at in turn.

2. THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

What does the management of learning involve?

Three features are important:

- (a) space
- (b) time
- (c) people

A. SPACE



EXERCISE 3. THE USE OF SPACE

Small group activity

Learning takes place within a setting, whether it is a classroom, workshop, laboratory or workplace. How that setting is organised affects how and what learning takes place.

This exercise helps you to explore how the organisation of the setting affects the learning relationship between trainer and trainee or teacher and student.

Methods

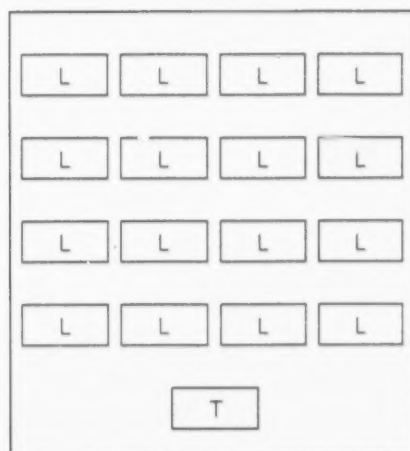
1. Look at Stimulus Sheet 6, 'Settings'.
2. Complete the schedule on the sheet.
3. Compare and discuss your responses with Stimulus Sheet 7, the completed schedule.
What particular features do you consider important?

Guidelines for facilitators

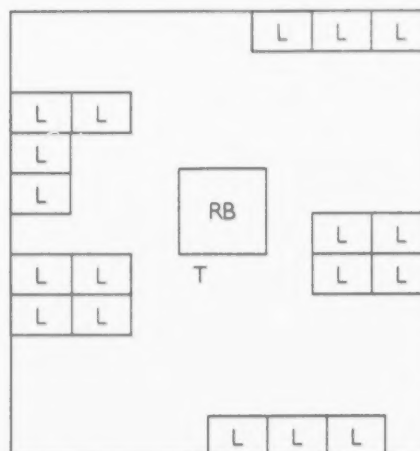
1. Form small groups.
2. Issue Stimulus Sheet 6, 'Settings'. Groups to complete the schedule.
3. Issue Stimulus Sheet 7, 'Completed schedule'.
4. Discuss the issues raised.

STIMULUS SHEET 6. SETTINGS

Setting A



Setting B



Key

T – Teacher or trainer

L – Learner

RB – Resources Bank

Schedule

Now write down what each setting implied in terms of:

	Setting A	Setting B
The role of the learner		
The role of teacher or trainer		
Potential for activity		

STIMULUS SHEET 7. COMPLETED SCHEDULE

	Setting A	Setting B
Role of the learner	– Learners likely to be passive – Little opportunity for individual discussion or interaction.	– Active learning possible. – Room for individual/small group activity. – Freedom of interaction with others and materials
Role of the teacher or trainer	– Focal point for work. – Likely to involve all learners at once.	– Freedom to move and interact with individuals/groups.

Setting B, then, is more likely to promote the activity and variety discussed above.

In fact the setting B type of layout is becoming more common in establishments. One example is the development of multi-skills workshops where a number of skills (office activities, construction trade) are integrated, allowing learners to experience, develop and transfer such skills.

The setting does not have to be purpose built. It is quite possible to modify the arrangements of setting A to a more active learning environment.

EXERCISE 4. CONSOLIDATION

Individual activity

Once you have completed the schedule, it is useful to try out the ideas in practice.

1. Look at the settings you use.
2. Try out different forms of arrangement of furniture and resources.
3. Record the impact which such changes make.
4. Compare them with those made by colleagues.

Guidelines for facilitators.

1. This activity should take place over a number of weeks.
2. Group members should negotiate the changes they will make.
3. Give them time to try out the changes (say a fortnight).
4. The group should bring back for discussion their observations on the changes.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN A LEARNING WORKSHOP

Some learners with special needs may require considerable help in adjusting to this more independent learner-centred style of working. They may have had long experience of being dependent on adults to make decisions, direct activities and sort out problems. All kinds of difficulties can arise, for example:

- Where is the equipment kept?
- What is the right tool to use?
- How do I use the equipment?
- What instructions do I follow?
- What order do the worksheets go in?
- Where do I find...?

Some suggestions:

- Establish a routine which can be followed (but not slavishly).
- Use a check-list to let the learners find where equipment and resources are kept when introducing both the whole environment and specific settings.
- Ensure that each learner has a ring binder or similar means of keeping complete work and worksheets in order.
- Record completed work on a check-list at the end of each session (to be kept with learners' work).
- Use visual and written signs to mark the location of resources.
- Where possible use storage equipment which allows the learner to gain easy access. Taking turns in issuing resources can enhance responsibility in learners.

Establishing a pattern for working also helps in:

- illustrating what the end product will be like, through a drawing, demonstration or actual example;
- collecting necessary resources;
- organising resources;
- carrying out the task;
- checking that the task is completed against a check-list;
- keeping the environment tidy;
- evaluating the work with another learner;
- clearing away;
- recording the task.

B. TIME

It was suggested earlier that learners with special needs benefit from engaging in a variety of activities within a single session to help them sustain concentration.

However, two problems arise in relation to the timing of the lesson:

- how long should each part of the lesson last?
- how long can the variation in speed of work by learner be catered for?

The length of each part of the lesson will depend on the total length of the teaching/training session, the learning objectives and the learners' level of competence. It may also depend on the mood of the learners and the time of day. Students may be able to concentrate for longer in the morning than in the afternoon. Some learners may find it difficult to settle down on Monday mornings after the weekend and so on.

In general, at least two-thirds of the session should be allocated for learners to be working on assignments. In sessions where learners can spend a lot of time sitting (such as communication skills, literacy, numeracy or health education), it is important to ensure that

there are opportunities for learners to change activities, e.g. from listening to taping, writing or drawing. In practical or creative activities trainees will be moving around and may be involved in a number of different processes. In these sessions it is important to allow time for learners to sit and discuss what they have achieved. This is a practical application of the process: experience, reflection, learning.

As the session progresses learners will complete their work at different points because not all learners work at the same rate. Coping with the learner who always finishes first and the learner who never seems to finish anything can be equally difficult. Some of the techniques described in Section 3 can help to overcome this problem, such as the use of individual work programmes which allow the learner to work through a long-term project or series of planned assignments at his or her own pace. However, this may be neither appropriate nor possible and, in that case, the following suggestions may prove helpful.

SIGNPOST

Element 3. Devising
Individual Learning
Programmes

- Set one or two tasks that you know everyone will complete by the end of the session. This helps to prevent the feelings of failure engendered in learners who never manage to complete a piece of work.
- Match learners according to their pace of work – in some tasks a fast learner can help a slow one. On the other hand you may prefer to have homogenous groupings, which allow faster groups to tackle more work.
- Be clear about your teaching/learning objectives as this will help you focus on the content and timing of the session.
- Have a range of activities related to the subject matter available for use by learners who tend to finish early. This gives them something to get on with and prevents them from distracting others who are still working. Examples include quizzes, finding small words in a large word, crosswords, finding the hidden shape, grouping/sorting activities.
- There are those learners who work slowly but who are relatively able and those who work quickly but whose standard is poor. Encourage the first group to time their work by working against the clock. The second group should be asked to evaluate their work in terms of presentation and consider how it could be improved. Invite them to do it again if they wish.
- Do not be depressed if the learner never seems to get through all the work you planned. It is better to plan too much than too little and there is always next time.

EXERCISE 5. THE PRACTICAL USE OF TIME

Activity in pairs

Understanding the principles of managing time is best pursued by checking on your current practice. This exercise provides the opportunity to learn from such practice.

1. Arrange for a colleague to observe one of your sessions.
2. Ask the chosen person to record the actual and percentage time spent on each of the following.

	Actual time within session	%
Trainer or teacher explaining and giving information		
Learners working individually or in small groups		
Whole-group discussion		
Assessment		
Other activities		

3. Discuss whether more or less time could or should have been spent on a particular activity.

C. PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS

Here we are concerned with helping staff to identify behaviour problems and suggesting strategies for coping with or avoiding difficulties. Some possible solutions are brought to your attention. We are not, however, dealing with learners who may have severe emotional or behavioural disorders, and for whom specialised support may be needed.

Agreement on what constitutes a behaviour problem can be a problem in itself. Behaviour acceptable to one member of staff may be unacceptable to another and this can lead to a temptation to categorise staff as being too authoritarian or too permissive.

Individual staff can vary their responses on different occasions and many staff can appear authoritarian on one occasion and permissive on another. Some common problems are presented by learners who:

- refuse to carry out activities;
- wander round the room;
- leave the room;
- destroy their own work;
- show aggressive behaviour towards other learners;
- show extreme acting out behaviour, e.g. throwing things, shouting;
- show withdrawn or submissive behaviour, e.g. allowing themselves to be bossed or bullied by others;
- constantly demand your attention;
- fail to respond to questions or contribute to class discussion;
- consistently arrive late for class;
- fail to complete work;
- are unable to work within the group situation.

Some problems are related to general classroom or workshop management strategies and others may have to be solved on an individual basis.

SIGNPOST

Element 8. Guidance and
Support

General classroom or workshop management strategies include:

- Tell the learners what you are going to do at the beginning of the lesson so that they are aware of the overall pattern of the session.
- Ensure that learners understand what they are being asked to do as frustration can lead to violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Avoid confronting learners in front of each other. Take the learner to one side, preferably to a quiet room, or suggest that you talk later.
- Do not expect all learners to concentrate all the time: their concentration span may be quite limited. Vary the tone and pitch of your voice and avoid spending too long using one method of input or on one activity. Find ways of stimulating curiosity and interest.
- Set realistic targets and remember to give encouragement and give praise when a target is reached. It may be an achievement for one learner to contribute to a discussion and for another to stick to the subject.
- Establish ground rules – these can be set through discussion with the whole group. Ask them to consider what behaviour they find irritating and how it can best be coped with.
- Try to stand back from the situation and decide how far a particular behaviour that is worrying you actually matters. If the rest of the group appear to be undisturbed then it may be best to leave well alone.
- Have plenty of back-up material available for learners who finish assignments quickly.
- Gauge the mood of the group – if they appear particularly restless or high-spirited you may need to alter what you had planned to do by using more formal activities which require a limited amount of classroom movement, e.g. drawing, tracing, copying.

computation or comprehension exercises. Such formal activities are useful ways of defusing situations before moving on to more interesting and stimulating activities.

- Seek advice from the course tutor, counsellor or course team.
- Be aware of learners' individual pressure points; which one has difficulty in reading, family problems, a long journey, a hearing or visual impairment? These factors should not become an excuse for anti-social behaviour but sensitivity on the part of the tutor or trainer can help avoid embarrassing or compromising a learner.
- You may also find behaviour modification techniques useful. Behaviour modification seeks to change behaviour patterns through a systematic programme of positive and negative reinforcements. For example, it can be used to modify group behaviour by identifying ground rules to help the conduct of the class, i.e. arriving punctually, allowing other learners to work in peace. Having pinpointed the target or desired behaviour, the trainer or teacher rewards learners who achieve it through praise (e.g. "Thank you for arriving on time") and ignoring those who do not, the premise being that everyone desires attention and will strive to achieve it.

EXERCISE 6. SOLVING BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

*In pairs or small group
activity*

Individual behaviour problems can be very disruptive for both staff and other learners. We have given (above) some general points to consider.

This exercise focuses on individual problems of behaviour which face the teacher or trainer. It is designed to help you to apply your skills together with those of your colleagues in order to tackle these difficulties.

1. Either identify one of the problems from the list above or a problem behaviour which you are facing in your current work.
2. Explain the problem to your partner/group.
3. Design a strategy to overcome it together. The following questions will help.
 - How many learners do this?
 - How often?
 - Does it irritate or distract other members of the group?
 - Is it dangerous?
 - How can I overcome it?
4. Repeat the activity, this time with your partner or another group member identifying a problem behaviour.

In this way you can share experience and approaches.

PEOPLE – AS GROUPS

*What is the value of
using group work for
learners with special
needs?*

*What is the function
of group work?*

So far the concentration has been on people as individuals. Great benefit in learning is gained from using groups.

Groups:

- help to transfer the focus of activity from you to the learner;
- provide learners with opportunities to take responsibility and make decisions;
- increase learners' sense of worth and self-confidence;
- offer experience in working with others;
- give learners more freedom to choose what they do.

There are three elements: *communication, co-operation and competition.*

- Communication activities
 - planning a course of action
 - expressing opinions and describing events
 - expressing feelings and emotions

- reporting back to whole groups
- offering solutions
- Co-operative activities
 - sharing out tasks
 - taking turns with equipment
 - making a group shape – what does this mean?
 - producing a joint piece of work
- Competitive activities
 - playing games
 - quizzes
 - quantity v. quality output, i.e. comparing how much is produced with how good it is

How do you develop group work?

A step-by-step approach

	Time
Step 1 – Ask questions of each learner in written form to be answered individually.	2–3 sessions
Step 2 – Working in pairs Ask questions or set small tasks. Learners start to share ideas.	2–3 sessions
Step 3 – Setting group tasks Let learners choose groupings – 2–5 per group. Set different tasks for each group so as to encourage communication and co-operation. Avoid competition. Collect feedback yourself. Learners become used to a larger group.	2–3 sessions
Step 4 – Mixing the groups, (the 'Rainbow'). Let learners choose groupings. Set different task for each group. When task is completed remix the groups so that each learner reports back on task to a different group.	

Task group

Red Group 4 learners	Yellow Group 4 learners
Green Group 4 learners	Blue Group 4 learners

Report group

Red Yellow Green Blue	Red Yellow Green Blue
Red Yellow Green Blue	Red Yellow Green Blue

A rainbow of strangers is created to share reports.

Step 5 – The mixed group

You choose the groupings. Possibly set the same task to introduce competition. Learners working with strangers on tasks.

The time devoted to each of these steps is important. Let the learners become familiar with each step before you move on to the next. This builds up confidence and ability to cope with new procedures. You will judge best with your own learners how quickly you can

What happens in groups?

move between the steps. The time suggested serves only as a guide. If the learners have already established the skills for some of the steps then you can select the group structure which best suits the learning situation.

These steps are only a guide. For some tasks you may want a mix of individuals (as a learning experience itself). Remember, however, that learners will tend to learn best when they feel comfortable and secure, so building an atmosphere of security promotes learning. This includes both an appropriate level of difficulty of task and an environment which is supportive.

As well as providing outcomes or products, groups also involve processes which are learning experiences in themselves. It is important for both you and learners to be aware of these underlying processes to enable them to function more effectively within the group.

Learners can be guided towards awareness by:

- Asking the learners to record their observations on how they worked in a group. Questions might include:
 - Who did you work with?
 - Have you worked with them before?
 - Who decided you would work together?
 - Who worked hardest?
 - What did you do?
 - What did your partner/other members of the group do?
 - Did you help anybody? How?
 - Did anybody help you? How?
- Allocating an observer to each, ask them to note:
 - who spoke first;
 - who didn't speak at all;
 - who talked the least;
 - who became bored.

How do you manage groups?

Make sure the learners know:

- What they are to do. Give clear instructions and objectives.
- How are they to do it. What sort of group mix, what resources they need.

Prompt sheets can help both of these.

Learners can find difficulty with groups but here are some examples of what to do:

- Seat quiet learners opposite talkative ones.
- Put partially hearing learners close to others so that light falls on their faces.
- Make verbal instructions clear and explicit to aid partially sighted learners.
- In exceptional circumstances, either allow particularly disruptive learners not to join a group, but to participate in feedback;
- or allocate a particular task within the group to such a learner.

While groups are working:

- Keep moving around.
- Don't stay too long with any one group.
- Watch for groups achieving very little – they probably need help.
- Help slow learners.
- Don't interrupt learners unnecessarily, they may be doing quite well without you!

Some learners may be shy or lack confidence in reporting the findings of a group. You can:

- ask each group to summarise findings in a hand-out;
- design an exercise which requires learners to switch groups and exchange information on findings, e.g. broken information exercise;
- ask learners to record their findings on a chart or OHP for you to relay to the rest.

What do you do while groups are working?

How do you handle feedback?

EXERCISE 7. TRYING OUT GROUP WORK

Individual activity

If you have not had much experience with group work, it can sometimes be difficult to try it out. This exercise provides you with the opportunity to develop the approach and to judge its value.

1. Choose a topic from your area of work for which you have previously used a 'whole group' approach.
2. Adapt the topic to a suitable small group method. (Use the ideas and information in the text to help you plan this.)
3. Try out your plan. While trying it out:
 - observe the differences in learner behaviour between the two styles;
 - list the differences in your role in:
 - planning the session
 - conducting the session;
 - note any changes needed in order to assess work;
 - note any differences in resources you need for each method;
 - note how you organise the setting;
 - check on how time is allocated to the various parts of the session.

You may find it useful to have a colleague to help you observe the trial.

4. Use the comparisons you have drawn to discuss with colleagues how well the approach worked. What modifications are needed? Does the approach work?

SUMMARY

Key points about managing learning:

- Be sensitive to needs.
- Make detailed preparation for use of time, space and resources.
- Allow the learners to do – don't impose your knowledge or ideas too much.
- Use yourself as a resource.
- Group work enhances both process and product skills.
- Stimulate involvement and development.

3. TRAINING/TEACHING METHODS

What methods are available to you?

EXERCISE 8. THE RANGE OF METHODS

Individual activity

Learning is best enhanced when appropriate methods are used. However, you cannot apply the appropriate method if you only know a few alternatives. The greater your armoury of alternatives, the more easily you can respond to needs in a flexible way.

Below is a list of methods and a space to record your response to them. Try out the list now and return to it periodically as you progress. (It is not a test).

METHOD	HAVE TRIED			HAVE NOT TRIED			Comments e.g. would use this for:
	Successfully	Unsuccessfully	Would use again	Need to ask what it is	Sounds useful	Would use if I knew how	
Brainstorming							
Brains Trust							
Buzz Group *							
Case History							
Case Study							
Debates							
Demonstration							
Discovery/Experimental Method *							
Discussion *							
Distance Teaching							
Field Trip							
Individual Practice							
Interview							
Laboratory							
Lecture							
Projects *							
Questionnaire							
Role Play							
Seminar							
Simulation *							

* Indicates methods given further consideration within this element

	HAVE TRIED			HAVE NOT TRIED			Comments e.g. would use this for:
	Successfully	Unsuccessfully	Would use again	Need to ask what it is	Sounds useful	Would use if I knew how	
Task Analysis *							
Team Teaching							
Tutorials							
Work Cards							
Work Shops							

* Indicates methods given further consideration within this element

SOME METHODS EXAMINED

The methods selected from the list are:

Brainstorming
 Buzz group
 Discussion
 Experiential learning/discovery method
 Projects
 Simulation
 Task analysis

These have been picked because they are methods which many staff have used successfully with learners with special needs. We must emphasise that they are not the only methods that can be used.

BRAINSTORMING

What is it?

The outpouring of ideas, usually by a group, related to an area of interest or problem. For a limited time (never less than five minutes, never more than fifteen minutes), ideas are presented freely and recorded without alteration or comment. It is not necessary that ideas should be related to each other. Quantity is more important than quality.

What are its uses?

- To identify several alternative ideas before making a decision.
- To consider many aspects of a problem, before attempting a solution.
- To act as a trigger to group discussion.

How to use it

The tutor or trainer should:

- explain the method to the group;
- suggest that a time limit be set;
- suggest that a recorder log every idea, (blackboard, overhead projector or flip chart) where the group can see them;
- urge that as many ideas as possible be produced;
- encourage far-fetched ideas since they may later lead to practical ideas;
- discourage criticism and evaluation of ideas;
- keep the group moving on to different varieties of ideas.

**Brainstorming an
educational visit: a
worked example**

After the brainstorming session you should:

- ask the group to select a shortlist of ideas;
- encourage the identification of similar ideas, and their grouping together;
- encourage discussion of major ideas, or their possible solutions;
- encourage the storing for future reference of ideas that are not going to be used immediately.

When would you not wish to use a brainstorming method?

This example has a dual function. It illustrates the use of brainstorming and also (in this instance) focuses on the educational potential and implications of a trip away from the normal course venue.

Depending on course content and objectives (which you may like to discuss), other potential visits may include the following to which you and your group may wish to add:

YTS: ITEC sports stadium, Outward Bound Centre

FE: Industrial visit, residential experience

Your group is considering the impact of information technology on jobs in your area. A member of the group says she has a contact in the data-processing department of a company in a nearby town and offers to arrange a visit. There is no train service and buses are infrequent. Your class and you set out to plan the activity. One learner is in a wheelchair.

Brainstorm the arrangements necessary to achieve a successful visit, as a preliminary to working out a formal programme and any other documentation required for distribution to the group going on the visit.

Brainstorm ideas:

- Preparatory classwork
- Follow-up classwork
- Transport timings
- Contact names at company
- Any regulations for visits
- Insurance cover
- Attenders/non-attenders
- Meal arrangements
- Loos for disabled people
- Badges
- Details to those who missed session when arrangements made
- Booking coach/payments
- Cancellation terms
- Collection of money
- Objectives of visit
- Evaluation of visit
- Materials required for/during visit
- Rendezvous
- Car/coach parking
- Costs
- Reprographics
- Check-list of questions/activities while on visit
- Access for disabled people
- Letter of confirmation of arrangements

- Letter of thanks
- Attendance list for company
- Numbers
- Walking distances out of doors
- Others interested to accompany class on visit
- Questions, etc., in advance to company so that they can prepare adequately.

You may wish to consider further brainstorming or other approaches to fill out individual items on the above list.

Rearrange lists of agreed items for inclusion using a blackboard, pin-up sheet, overhead projector or flipchart (to be developed eventually as a check-list to aid the success of the event). An example would be:

Academic/course work:

- Objectives of visit
- Preparatory classwork/homework
- Check-list of questions/activities while on visit
- Follow-up activities
- Evaluation of visit – did it achieve its objectives?

Administration:

- Costs
- College regulations
- Insurance cover
- Timings/rendezvous
- Coach booking/payment arrangements/cancellation terms
- Maps for independent travellers/coach driver
- Car/coach parking
- Details for absentees
- List of attenders
- Meal arrangements
- Badges
- Clothing
- Walking distances out of doors
- Access for disabled people
- Reprographics
- Task allocation
- Collection of money/accounting records

BUZZ GROUP

What is it?

An informal division of a group into sub-groups, usually of between three and eight people. It is normally used for only part of a session – often for merely a few minutes at a time – and may be repeated, with the same or different membership, in the same session. It may have an appointed leader or be leaderless.

What are its uses?

- To avoid teacher- or trainer-centredness.
- To change pace or focus.
- To provide feedback on your input.
- To release tension.
- To establish/maintain contact among class members.

How to use it

You should:

- be clear as to the purpose;
- ensure the class is aware of the aim of the group and the exact topic;
- if feedback is desired, ensure a means for this (appoint a rapporteur, supply flip-chart, etc.);

Examples

- if there is no formal feedback, ensure the groups know this;
- announce the duration of the group session;
- decide in advance if movement to groups presents practical problems or not.

Use buzz groups to:

- defuse a controversy between two class members;
- break up cliques;
- plan the next sequence of group activity;
- mix shy and articulate members more productively.

What are the disadvantages of buzz groups?

DISCUSSION METHOD

What is it?

It consists of a group putting together its knowledge, ideas, options, in a co-operative endeavour to learn from one another. If members of the group ignore the co-operative element and fail to accept responsibility for facilitating, 'gatekeeping' and summarising, etc., then discussion becomes argument, debate a series of monologues by closed minds.

A discussion topic has the following criteria:

- It is interesting.
- It falls within the experience and/or knowledge of the group.
- It is open to different points of view
- It is clearly stated.
- To promote understanding (in addition to manipulative skills which are developed by practice).
- To pool knowledge in order to solve a problem.
- To develop critical thinking in order to overcome entrenched attitudes and prejudices.
- To give feedback to one another and to the tutor or trainer.
- To develop communication skills; listening as well as talking.
- When there is a need to build the class into a co-operative group.
- When problems/questions/comments emerge which seem to be of relevance to the whole group.
- When the tutor or trainer wants to assess whether the group members share a common understanding about a subject.
- When the group needs to plan to meet its own learning needs.

What is it for?

SIGNPOST

Element 8. Guidance and Support – Exercise 6 and Section on 'Attending and active listening'

When do you use it?

How do you use it?

Planning

You should:

- become familiar with the topic;
- prepare an outline and notes of main points;
- prepare questions to start the group going and keep it going;
- prepare the room and layout;
- think about the group members and how to make use of their special interests and experience in the discussion;
- encourage the group to think about the topic beforehand;
- prepare an introduction which will:
 - a) introduce the topic and state the purpose of the discussion;
 - b) stimulate the group interest and show how it concerns them.

The purpose of a discussion group

What does a discussion group provide?

Execution

You should:

- encourage the group to share responsibility for the discussion;
- be 'gatekeeper' and facilitator where necessary;
- enable leadership to flow round the group by resisting becoming the 'authority';
- encourage the group to evaluate its performance, calling on the recorder and summarising views from time to time.

The sharing of experiences within the group is the *raison d'être* of the discussion group. It provides those conditions in which the ideas and attitudes of the leader and the group members can be identified, examined and, if necessary, changed. Group discussion is necessary when group action is desired; it follows that the group must be prepared for group discussions, group ideas, group decisions, group policy, group plan, group follow-up, group action.

The major problem for the leader is how to guide and lead without interfering – how to get the 'best' and discard the irrelevant. This implies that the leader is clear about the objectives, but it is not the function of the leader to tell the group what their ideas should be, what decisions they should take. The group leader is, however, in a very strong position; how to use his position without abusing it is the art to be practised.

Amongst the essentials it must provide:

- an opportunity to participate;
- an opportunity to learn:
 - a) to identify facts, ideas, concepts and to handle them;
 - b) to learn what their own attitudes are and to test their validity (for leader and group);
 - c) to test, examine, evaluate and analyse;
 - d) to contribute from their own experience and to learn from the experience of others;
 - e) to relate this joint experience to the problems, topics or matters under discussion;
 - f) to formulate new ideas; to think for themselves;
 - g) to express themselves in language which is logical and clear, in speech and in writing.

MORE ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS

As you can see, discussion can be a very powerful tool. However, young people with learning difficulties can have specific communication problems which inhibit their capacity to contribute to discussions.

Typical amongst these are:

- identifying and expressing feelings, needs and opinions;
- expressing concerns and frustrations through language;
- questioning the opinions, values and attitudes of others, particularly adults or authority figures (this may include you);
- general communication skills, e.g. listening.

The developmental stages of group work and such techniques as brainstorming and buzz groups (see above) can greatly aid confidence and ability to speak.

Listening and concentration skills can be developed through simple activities such as:

- learners sequencing a set of cards by following taped instructions;
- learners working in pairs and telling each other about their interests, likes and dislikes which are then related to the larger group;
- learners watching a video sequence, then recounting the main points.



EXERCISE 9: PRACTICAL DISCUSSION METHODS

Whole group activity

Good discussions depend on awareness and involvement. It is useful to develop your own awareness and involvement so that you can assist learners.

This exercise is designed to help you to explore the processes for discussion.

1. Brainstorm ideas about how learners can be encouraged to express their feelings and needs.
2. Form a discussion group around the ideas generated.
3. One member of the group is appointed as an observer. The observer should note examples of people who:
 - check that they understand what other people mean;
 - use people's names;
 - ask people to give concrete examples;
 - keep the discussion focused on the main issue.
4. After the discussion, take the information presented by the observer.

Discuss any difficulties you had in expressing your own ideas and understanding each other.

What techniques used by other members of the group did you find helpful in progressing the discussion?

Guidelines for facilitators

This activity will require some support if it is to be effective. You may need to take the lead:

1. to organise the brainstorm;
2. to formulate questions from the brainstorm to start discussion;
3. to appoint and brief the observer;
4. to organise the debriefing discussion.

An alternative way of observing would be to make a video recording of the session. You can then ask all group members to participate in the evaluation. This in itself should stimulate discussion.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (DISCOVERY METHOD)

What is it?

It is a broad term used to describe the processes involved in learning by doing. Learners are encouraged to note, try out, examine and explore activities, environments or even ideas.

What is it for?

- To obtain understanding through practical experience.
- To familiarise learners with materials.
- To pose problems for learners to solve.
- To promote self-reliance and responsibility through taking risk.

How do you use it?

The basic learning process involves

Experience → Reflection → Learning

Experience can occur:

- naturally within the teaching/training environment or locally (for example finding the way to a room or placement);
- as a planned part of the learning programme, for example planning and carrying out an event.

Reflection involves structured thinking or talking through the experience to draw out the main learning points.

In describing experiential learning you should:

- analyse learners' needs and interests to assess the nature and type of experience that they will benefit from and be stimulated to undertake;

- prepare by analysing the skills involved in the activity to ensure the gradual introduction of new elements;
- allow for risk taking. It is useful to set targets for learners a bit beyond their present level of operation. Recognising that this can create anxiety for learner and staff, support needs to be provided. But overprotection may negate the experience;
- plan for support. The level and type will depend on students/trainees' developing capabilities and experience of situations;
- allow time to talk through the experience;
- provide follow-up activities and assessment. This is a vital part of the process. Analysing the experience encourages reflection and reinforces the learning (positive and negative).



EXERCISE 10. USING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Small group activity

It is emphasised throughout this pack that active participation and the use of direct experience are powerful tools in assisting learning, particularly for learners with special needs.

This activity is designed to assist you to develop a successful approach.

1. Plan an experience for a group of your learners. The experience might be a visit to a workplace, a social event or simply finding their way around your establishment.
2. Use the following check-list of questions as a basis.

CHECK-LIST

Planning

- What things can this experience achieve?
- When is it going to take place?
- Where?
- Who must be consulted?
- What are the difficulties to be overcome?
- What resources does it need?

Operating

- What skills are the learners using:
 - communication – reading and writing?
 - numeracy – measuring, time-telling?
 - practical – using equipment, safety?
 - social – working with others? self-reliance?
 - decision making – planning, finding out?

Reflecting and debriefing

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- How did it feel?

3. Try out the approach with a group of learners.
4. Use the 'reflection and debriefing' questions to judge the approach. Discuss them with colleagues.

AN EXAMPLE FROM *TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD: A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITY* (FEU, 1986)

Experiential Learning

Learning by doing has been a popular teaching technique in nursery and primary education since Piaget first postulated the view that a child's cognitive development is facilitated by learning through activity. However, children who are confined to a wheelchair or who have restricted mobility may well have missed out on many of the formative experiences of early childhood, e.g. playing in mud, sea, sand, grass. Moreover, by the time learners arrive in college, they may well have spent 16-18 years of having things done to, or for, them rather than having done things themselves. Indeed this is felt by many staff to be one of the root causes of the passivity which is evident in many of the learners on entry to college.

Experiential learning was found to be particularly effective in breaking through the passivity of the learner and helping him/her to develop the confidence to accept responsibility for his/her life. Many experiential learning situations arise naturally from being in college, for example:

- finding one's way around
- asking for help
- using a self-service refectory
- working alongside able bodied peers

Others however will form part of the teaching programme and can be undertaken individually or in groups, such as making arrangements to have a haircut or organising a disco for the students at college.

The following example illustrates the way in which one member of staff at North Nottinghamshire College applied an experiential approach to the mobility section of the curriculum.

Mobility

At the outset of the course, the students took part in practical wheelchair maintenance sessions, often going home covered in mud and oil (NB. Warn parents beforehand!). They then moved on to activities which the tutor himself wryly described as 'lung busting exercises'. The tutor concerned was well-experienced in teaching students with physical disabilities and was convinced that many of them had never explored the limits of their physical capabilities. The exercises he developed were therefore designed to encourage students to explore these limits while at the same time developing their mobility skills and self-confidence.

The activities varied from wheelchair exercises in the local vicinity (renowned for its hills) for the development of physical stamina, and the practice of road safety and kerb strategies, to 'assault courses' within a classroom using chairs and tables as obstacles. Indeed it soon proved commonplace to see students in wheelchairs lashed to a tree at the top of a grassy slope attempting to pull another student in a wheelchair up the slope whilst passers by stopped to voice their opinions which ranged from amusement to disbelief and outrage.

The students were also encouraged to undertake individual mobility projects. The following example also demonstrates the cross-curricular nature of the 'Transition to Adulthood' course, drawing together from the modules:

- Mobility – objectives
The student will:
 - demonstrate an awareness of his/her disability and how this affects mobility;
 - be proficient in wheelchair handling;
 - be proficient in wheelchair maintenance;
 - be aware of his/her rights to mobility allowances;
 - have travelled independently using public transport.
- Basic education – objectives
The student will have had experience of:
 - reading for information;

- planning and participating in outings and visits;
- communicating both orally and in writing with a wide variety of people and agencies;
- extending his/her general knowledge of the local community and its services.

For his project, one student decided to travel home from college using public transport. This may seem commonplace to most of us, but was a major achievement to David who had never travelled independently before. The task was broken down into its constituent parts and a great deal of time was spent in preparation for the occasion. This included:

- organising a 'pusher' to take him to the local railway station;
- liaising with British Rail to organise (a) someone to help him on to the train at Worksop and off at the next station where he had to change platforms and get onto another train, (b) someone to help him off the train at Newark;
- ordering a taxi to be waiting at Newark station to take him home;
- planning what to do in the event of an emergency, e.g. finding himself at Kings Cross, London!

Obviously this type of exercise involves an element of risk which can cause anxiety for the student, his/her parents and indeed the lecturer. However, if the student feels confident enough to tackle the activity and the project is meticulously researched and planned, its successful completion can provide a tremendous boost to a student's self-confidence with far-reaching consequences for the future. Benefits to the lecturer are less obvious as he/she may well 'age' several years while waiting for the phone call which signals the successful completion of the project!

PROJECTS

What are they?

- Activities which draw together (or combine) a number of skills under a common theme. The activities usually run over an extended period, from one week to a year.
- A means of developing a range of skills and enabling them to be applied to a particular issue.

What are they for?

Projects provide a vehicle for learners to fulfil course programme objectives in interesting and meaningful ways. Attempting to achieve objectives in a mechanical, sequential fashion has its value (see task analysis); however, many learners with special needs require variety and concrete experience around which to develop skills.

The development of core skills, now a popular theme in many courses and programmes (for example BTEC, CGLI, YTS), has led to the break away from teaching/training in specific areas or subjects. Many staff have found value in integrating work. Projects offer a vehicle for integration.

How do you use them?

In developing and implementing projects, the same processes used in programme design are employed, namely:

- Identification of needs and interests – starting with those of the learners, but remembering what you see as being in their interest.
- Setting aims and objectives – what it is the learners are to achieve and how they are to achieve it.
- Design of the project. What themes will you use? What resources will you need? What stages will it go through? How will the learner be involved?
- Implementation. In carrying out the project you need to monitor progress, identifying difficulties as they arise, and adjust the design accordingly. Careful support for learners is required so that they are neither left floundering nor overprotected. You may wish to negotiate different activities so that all gain experience of the variety of skills which the project may offer.
- Evaluation. This can include assessment of the final product, but more importantly involves exploring the skills developed and the processes experienced.

SIGNPOST

Element 7. Technical Aids and Information

Technology – examples of projects undertaken.

EXERCISE 11. DEVELOPING A PROJECT

Small group activity

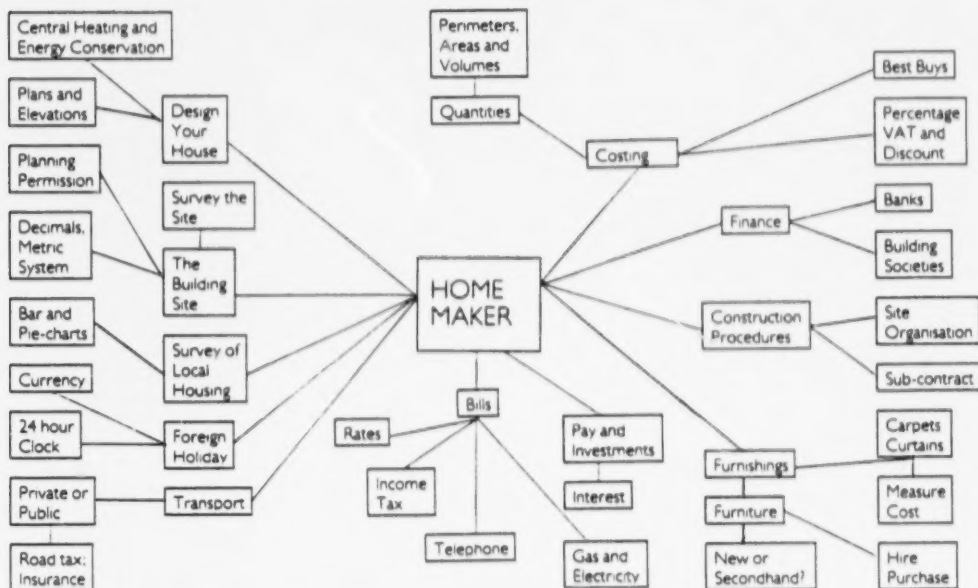
Methods

As we have suggested, project work helps to provide integration of different areas of knowledge. In this exercise the processes involved in developing project work are explored.

1. As a group decide on a theme that you want to explore. (Some ideas might include – finding a job, family tree, or going on holiday.) You may wish to select a theme from your course/training programme objectives.
2. Brainstorm the related themes. Use the web diagram sheet to see how the themes can be related.
3. Draw up a web diagram for the brainstormed ideas.
4. Identify possible projects
5. Design one each of these projects using the processes outlined above. Pay particular attention to the skills that are included and how you cater for your students/trainees with special needs.

WEB DIAGRAM 1

Below is a web diagram showing the core theme of Homemaker. Branching from it are possible related themes, in this case related to numeracy. Beneath it are a range of projects that such a theme could generate.



During the year, in order to develop their experiences, skills and knowledge in the above areas, students may choose *FOUR* of the following projects:

1. Make a dolls house size model of your house.
2. Design and cost the garden.
3. Decorate a room.
4. Plan and cost the kitchen or the bathroom.
5. Plan and cost the meals for a family for a month.
6. Make a set of clothes for themselves or someone else.
7. Plan and cost a workshop for a home handyman.
8. Make a piece of furniture.

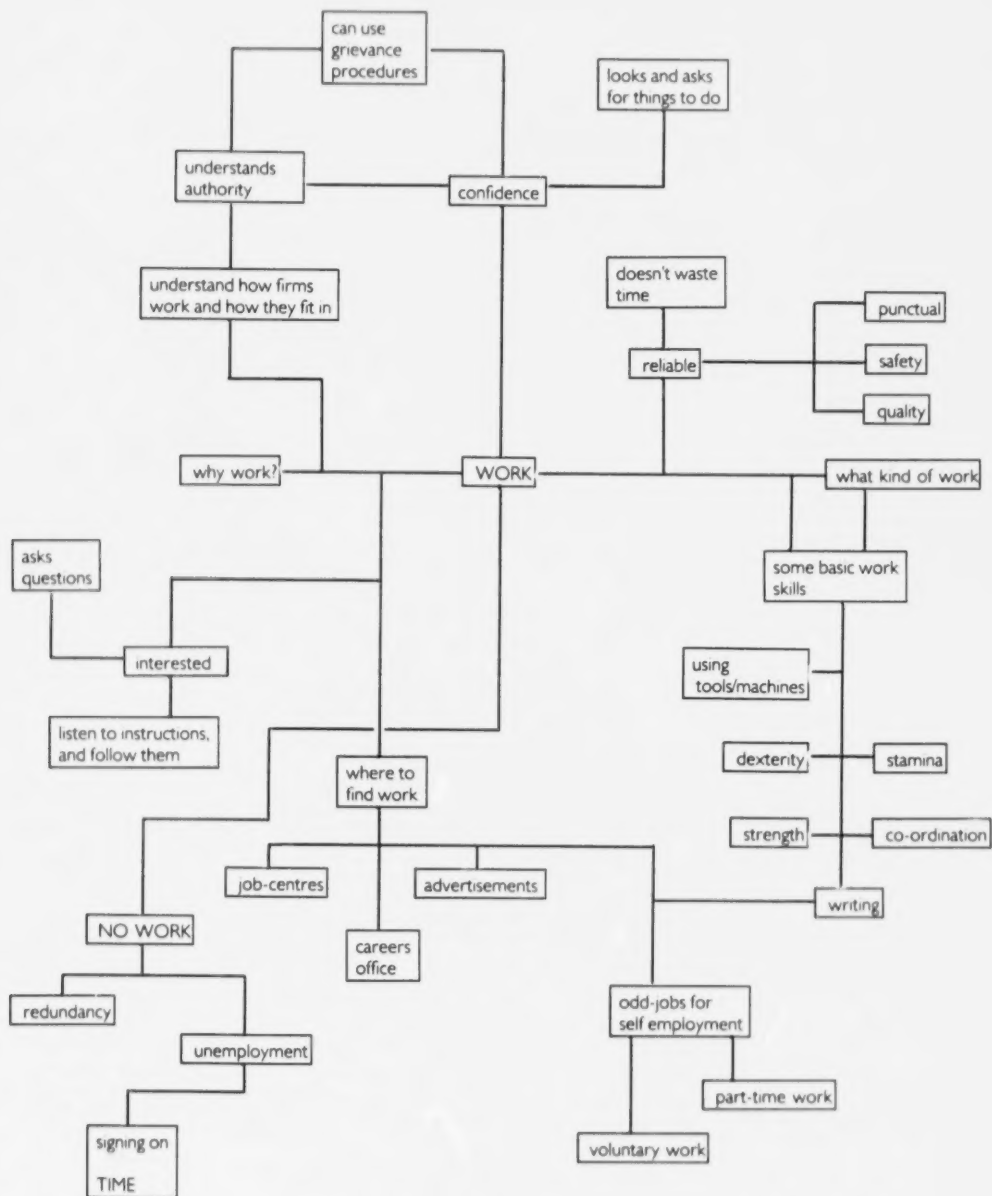
Source: *Common Core Teaching and Learning* (Longman for FEU, 1984)

WEB DIAGRAM 2

'To Work'

Aim:

To provide a basis from which a young person can make an informed and realistic decision with respect to his or her immediate future.

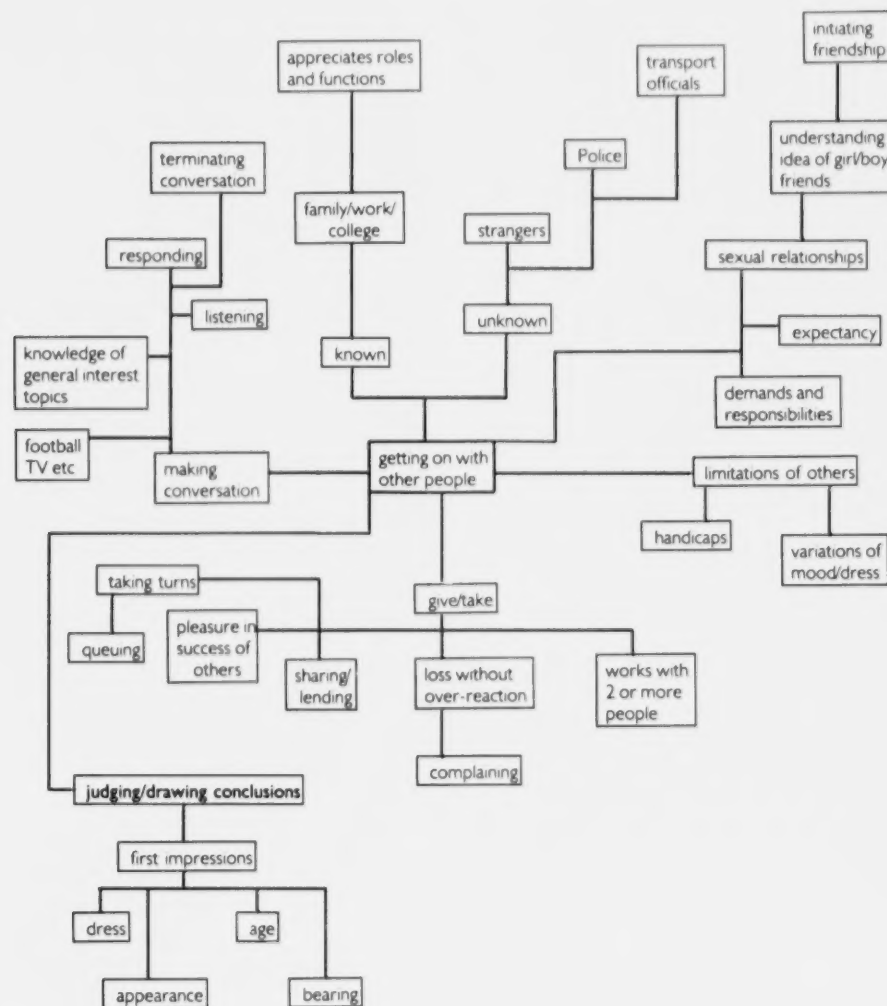


WEB DIAGRAM 3

'To get on with other people'

Aim:

To bring about an ability to develop satisfactory personal relationships with others.



SIMULATION

What is it?

Simulation involves a range of activities which attempt to explore situations in a controlled way and which offer a form of rehearsal and reinforcement for real experiences. Participants experience events in relatively sheltered environments without having to cope with the complexities and dangers of real life.

What is it for?

- It provides opportunities for learners to develop and test out skills. Many learners with special needs may lack confidence in, or be disturbed by, new, challenging situations. By exploring them in a controlled protective way, learning can be enhanced and inhibitions removed.

What types are there?

- It allows for risks to be taken and mistakes made, without damaging consequences.
- Learners can become involved with a character/circumstance they might normally be unaware of or unsympathetic towards. Seeing how others might perceive them develops appropriate responses; for example, leading to self-advocacy.
- It can serve to demonstrate the complexities of decisions and procedures.

There are three main types of simulated activities:

- case-studies
- games
- role-play

Case-studies

Case-studies identify a real situation or a person in a situation and ask learners to explore what they would do or how they would react. Case-studies have the value of being external to the learners and therefore provide a degree of safety and non-emotional involvement in which they can be examined. For example, you might want to explore coping skills. A case-study such as: 'Richard missed the bus to his work placement this morning. What would you do?', could stimulate discussion, drawing out possible lines of action.

Games

Games provide a means of exploring activities and situations in a fairly strict, rule-bound framework. They are valuable for showing systems, causes and effects at work and help to develop concentration, teamwork and co-operation. The range is enormous, from commercially produced materials to those designed for specific groups by individual staff. Imaginative application is the key.

An example, Kim's game – displaying an array of items then removing some and asking learners to identify what is missing – can be used in a variety of ways. It can be applied to the recognition of tools for vocabulary development, and aid observation and concentration.

How could you use it with your learners?

Role-play

Role-play involves learners in acting out situations by assuming roles. They can be based on real or imagined situations and help learners to prepare for, or reflect on, real situations they encounter. Value can be gained from the learner acting as her/himself in the situation or from assuming the role of another person. The former is fairly easy for many learners and helps them in explaining their ideas and opinions and making decisions. The latter often needs considerable support in that the lack of experience of many learners constrains their imagination and understanding of how other people operate. Character and storyline may need to be made clear. As confidence grows so greater improvisation can take place.



EXERCISE 12. ROLE-PLAYS

Whole group activity

Broadening experience of situations for learners with special needs in a safe environment is the essence of role-play. Understanding and experiencing the processes involved in role-play can help you to support learners when they undertake them. This exercise provides you with the opportunity to do just that.

1. Two members of the group are given the roles to play.
2. Other members of the group observe the role-play. While observing you should take note of:
 - what happens in the role-play;
 - what the participants say and how they react to each other.
3. Once the role-play has finished, discuss the action and any important pieces of dialogue. Role-players should contribute to this, adding their views on how the experience felt.
4. Discuss the facts, principles, causes and effects which arise from the role-play.

Role-play has three major components

Guidelines for facilitators

Briefing

1. Brief the participants carefully (they may be volunteers or selected group members). To help with this, two stimulus sheets on the person and context are provided. You may have your own. These should be given to participants and observers.
2. Allow time for the situation to be absorbed and understood. Try not to impose dialogue; rather, allow it to come from the role-players.
3. Brief the observers on what they are to look for. There are suggestions on the activity sheet. You may want to include non-verbal as well as verbal communication.

Acting out

1. Allow the scene to develop spontaneously. Do not intervene unless it seems to be drawing to a natural conclusion.
2. The timing is important; it can be difficult for individuals to sustain a role-play for more than half an hour. It is best to stop the scene once you are happy that sufficient points have been made.
3. You may wish to video the scene so that precise observations can be made afterwards.

Discussion

1. Allow the participants to come out of role (they can get very involved!). A short break is useful, say five minutes.
2. Focus the initial discussion on the immediate context, including dialogue and participants' feelings. It is important to do this first, before exploring the more general issues which emerge. Remember that you are dealing with an individual situation and immediate reactions and insights which may subsequently be lost.
3. Extend the discussion to the general issues, i.e. the significance of what happened, in order to place the role-play in a wider context.
4. Complete the discussion (if it seems appropriate) by exploring the value of the role-play. You may want to refer back to the information on this.
5. Further background information on the role-play learner characters is presented in the **Resources Section**. You may wish to refer to this material.

STIMULUS SHEET 8. ROLE-PLAY SELECTION: YTS

Manager/supervisor

You are interviewing a school-leaver who has been sent along to you by the Careers Service. You have to explain what the scheme offers, its aims and methods of working. You must also identify some of the learning needs of the interviewee and establish whether your scheme satisfies his needs.

School-leaver – Ivan – Character 11

You are a 16-year-old school-leaver who has been sent along to the Youth Training Scheme by the Careers Service to see if you would like to join it. You know nothing about YTS or the particular scheme you are sent to. You have a hearing impairment. You are also nervous and afraid to ask questions in case you look a fool. Your real interest is in catering and you would eventually like to be a chef but have no idea how to go about achieving this and have received no career guidance to help you. A friend of yours is already on the YTS scheme and this makes it more attractive.

Act out the meeting.

STIMULUS SHEET 9. ROLE-PLAY ATTENDANCE: FE/YTS

Tutor/Trainer

A meeting between Ronke and the Tutor/Trainer

You have noticed the persistent absence of Ronke from your sessions. When attending she usually arrives late, offers no explanation and disrupts activities. You ask to see her to give an account of this behaviour.

Ronke – Character 7

You are a wheelchair user. You have considerable ability and although you have missed much educational experience in the past, you find the course you are on very easy and consequently you are bored by it. The transport service provided to the establishment is erratic so the effort of getting there is sometimes too much.

Act out the meeting.

HOW DO YOU USE SIMULATION?

Here is a check-list of points to help you build an exercise.

Objectives – Keep them simple, share them with the group. Learners will benefit from knowing the general issue they are dealing with.

Learner involvement – Decide which type of involvement best suits the objectives. Role-play builds confidence, but can seem daunting to timid learners. Externalising the experience to a third party may provide greater motivation for the learner.

Realism – Participation is often encouraged when the exercise relates to experiences which the learners are likely to have. This involves choosing an appropriate situation and making any support material as similar to the real thing as possible (for example a simulated work setting or a flat).

Before and after – Simulation should always form a natural part of any ongoing course/programme. Prepare for it and use what it produces later on.

Time – Always allow enough to give learners a chance to derive the optimum benefit. Learners with special needs sometimes require a lot of preparation in understanding rules or precisely what is required.

Solutions – Always ask learners to make positive decisions on solutions regarding problems set, otherwise they may evade the issues or become side-tracked. But don't pressurise too much as a decision may be made too rapidly and be unrealistic.

Equipment and rooms – Make sure you have all that you require before you start.

Unwilling participants – Don't force such learners to join in. The observation of the exercise is itself valuable. The enjoyment experienced by others will often stimulate participation.

Reflection – debriefing – The key to the whole exercise. Learners should go over the experience in detail looking at what happened, how and why. This must also be taken into account when gauging time.

TASK ANALYSIS

What is it?

The breaking down of a task to be learnt into small steps through which the learner progresses. Progress is measured against the learner's own performance, not standards set externally or against the progress of others. This is seen as particularly benefiting learners with special needs as it emphasises their positive development rather than stressing their deficiencies. The technique forms part of the broader behaviour modification approach to training. This has been used for some time in special education as a means of modifying severe behaviour problems, using a strict regime of rewards and punishments.

What is it for?

In the context of post-16 education and training a strict regime is unlikely to work. However the use of short steps with observable progress provides the learner with confidence to continue and satisfaction from ultimately mastering a skill or achievement objective.

For example, laying bricks incorporates the tasks of:

- obtaining quantities
- mixing mortar
- handling a trowel
- applying mortar to bricks with a trowel
- laying bricks in sequence
- bonding bricks together

Many more detailed sub-tasks may also be required.



EXERCISE 13. TASK ANALYSIS

Small group activity

Breaking down a task into its component parts may seem fairly easy. However, it involves looking carefully at the task to ensure that you cover every conceivable aspect. You cannot assume any knowledge on behalf of the individual undertaking the task.

This exercise involves you in analysing a task.

1. Choose a task which you wish to break down into small steps. You may have your own tasks, but here are some examples:

- the basic operation of a word processor;
- gaining access to a room at the top of a four storey building with lift for a wheelchair user (See Character 7 – Ronke);
- answering a telephone (See Character 12 – Dana);
- changing a car wheel (See Character 10 – Ivan).

2. Identify the steps involved. (Each group should tackle the same task.)

3. Compare your steps with those of other groups. How many steps are identified? Will the steps lead to successful completion of the task?

1. You may need to provide a completed example of this in order to give group members some idea of the detail required. If this is the case then use the completed example in Element 6, **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials** (Designing materials – an example).

2. Encourage the groups to tackle the activity in detail. The element of competition in both the number of steps and their success (or otherwise) in enabling the task to be carried out, can motivate the groups.

Trying the finished product out is a useful way of reinforcing the need for detail.

SIGNPOST

Element 6. **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials** – steps in changing a wheel in 'Designing materials – an example.'

Guidelines for facilitators

How do you use it?

The basic principles of task analysis are as follows:

Observation – Studying the trainee/student's current abilities/performance in a given setting.

Training – Using the information obtained from observation to devise a training programme. Task analysis fits in here.

The steps form a chain which leads to the achievement of the objective. Each step is taught through prompting, encouragement and modelling (i.e. showing how it is done then letting the learner try).

Where possible the environment should be free of distractions which may break concentration. Record progress.

Reinforcement – Provide rewards for the learner as each step is completed. (These should be agreed between you and the learner. They may consist of almost anything mutually acceptable – sweets, free time, etc.) Mistakes are ignored.

Evaluation – Progress is constantly monitored and recorded through referring back to the start-line information. A check-list of skills and the criteria for success will be needed.

Transfer and generalisation – Once the skill/task is learned, it is practised in different environments to ensure transfer of learning.

EXERCISE 14. PLANNING A PROGRAMME BASED ON A TASK

Small group activity

As we have suggested, a task analysis forms part of an overall programme of individualised training/education.

In this exercise you are given the opportunity to produce such a programme.

1. Plan a programme for the successful development of skills to perform a task.
2. Use the list of principles given above. Apply it to help one of the learners in tackling a task identified in Exercise 13.

SIGNPOST

If you require further guidance on the approach to use, look at the steps in Element 3, *Devising Individual Learning Programmes*.

The programme should include:

- nature of training (task analysis)
- method of training (including reinforcement)
- criteria for success
- criteria for evaluation

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE METHODS?

First let us re-emphasise the need for variety. A single method will not solve all your problems.

Second, a method should not be seen as synonymous with a session. As we have already seen, variety and activity are important elements within any session.

There are various approaches to selection.

EXERCISE 15. SELECTING A METHOD

Small group activity

This exercise is designed to help you choose appropriate methods.

1. Form small groups.
2. Look at the list of methods on page 19.
3. Classify them according to the objectives that you want the learners to achieve. Use the table provided. (Note that methods can serve several purposes.)

METHODS RECORDING SHEET

Record the methods on this sheet.

When the objective is to develop skill	When the objective is to impart knowledge	When the objective is to change attitudes
e.g. Demonstration	e.g. Case-study	e.g. Case-study Role-play

4. PLANNING AND PREPARING A SESSION

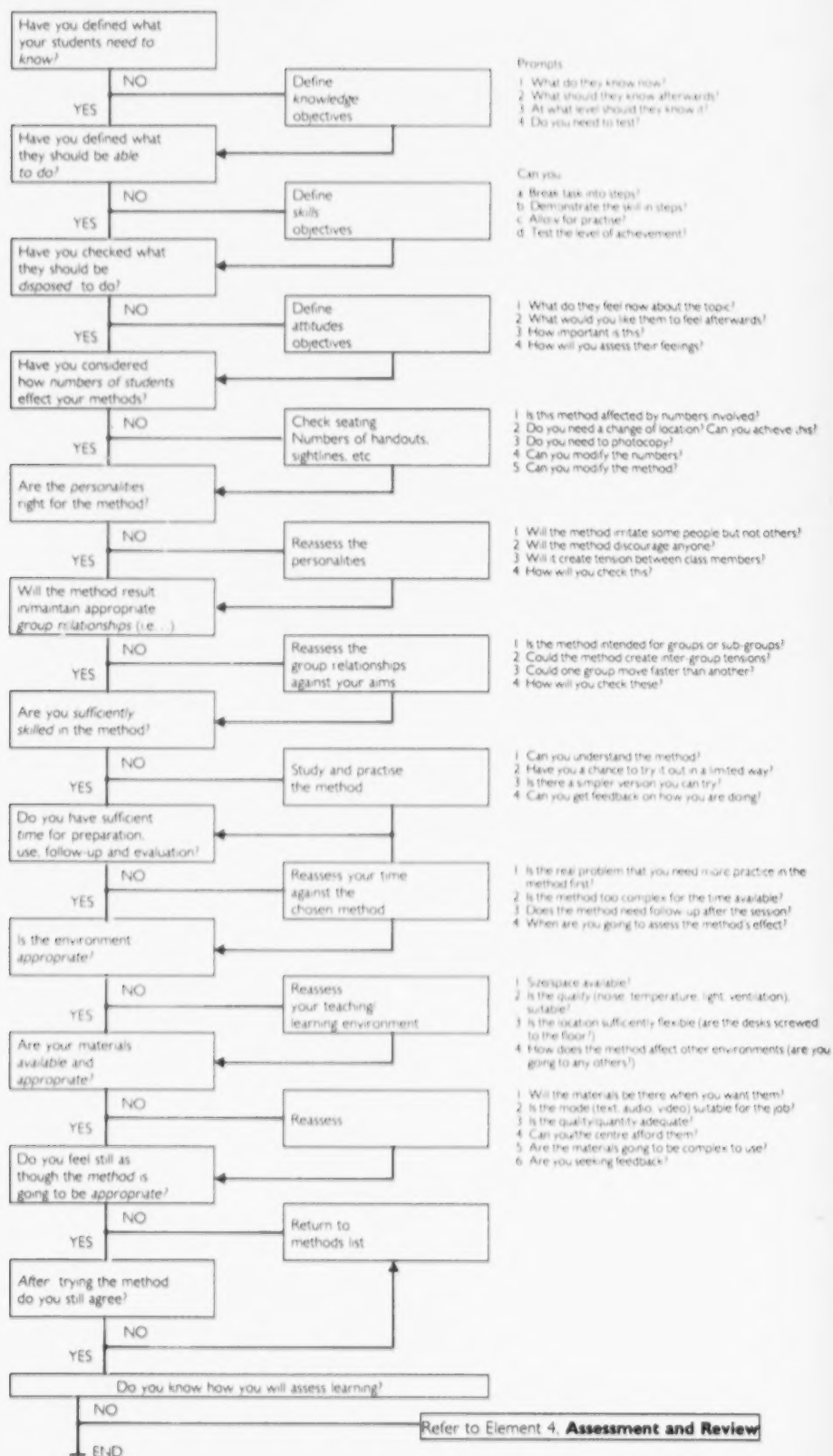
FACTORS TO CONSIDER

In planning and preparing a session you will need to consider the following:

- the needs of learners
- aims and objectives
- content
- methods
 - what you will be doing
 - what the learners will be doing
- resources
- assessment of trainees'/students' learning
- evaluation of the session

The following flow-chart shows this process and some of the decisions you will need to make in more detail.

FLOW-CHART. SESSION PLANNING



EXERCISE 16. PLANNING A SESSION

Individual activity

This activity provides you with the opportunity to practise session planning.

1. Choose a topic from your own area of work.
2. Plan a session using the following questions as a basis.
 - What are the needs of the learners?
 - What are the aims and objectives?
 - What is the content?
 - What methods will you employ?
 - What will you be doing?
 - What will the learners be doing?
 - What resources will you need?
 - How will you arrange the setting?
 - How will you assess learning?

Small group activity

3. Form small groups of people who work on the same topic areas.
4. Compare the plans you have made.
5. Discuss the similarities and differences in the plans. Are the differences significant (refer to next page)?

WHY ARE DIFFERENCES IMPORTANT?

Trainers and tutors are all individuals. Therefore there is bound to be a variety in the way they relate to learners, in the styles they adopt, in the nature of the areas of knowledge they possess.

However, too much variety can lead to inconsistent treatment of learners; confusing experiences which distract from the fulfilment of the aims of the programme.

It is important that teachers and trainers work as a team with their colleagues. Sharing a general common understanding of the programme and being consistent in the process by which its objectives can be fulfilled are vital to the learner's success. Teamwork also has great advantages in:

- sharing ideas and resources;
- supporting and encouraging the use of unfamiliar training/teaching approaches;
- encouraging the taking of risks.

SIGNPOST

For further information on teams see Element 2, Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies.

SUMMARY

EVALUATION CHECK-LIST

Can you:

- Identify what is meant by active learning?
- Use active learning approaches in your teaching/training?
- Arrange the setting to provide variety of activity?
- Manage time to allow for different paces of working?
- Organise and manage the activities of individual learners in the setting?
- State the main features and value of group-work?
- Identify a range of methods available to you in delivering a course/training programme?
- Use a variety of techniques appropriate for learners with special needs?
- Specifically, use:
 - brainstorm?
 - buzz groups?
 - discussion?
 - experiential learning?
 - projects?
 - simulation?
 - task analysis?
- Select appropriate methods to use with your learners to provide activity and variety?

SIGNPOSTS

Links to other elements include the following:

SIGNPOST
Introductory Element

SIGNPOST
Element 2. **Curriculum/
Training Programme
Design and Evaluation
Strategies**

SIGNPOST
Element 3. **Devising
Individual Learning
Programmes**

SIGNPOST
Element 4. **Assessment
and Review**

SIGNPOST
Element 6. **Design and
Adaptation of Learning
Materials**

SIGNPOST
Element 7. **Technical
Aids and Information
Technology**

SIGNPOST
Element 8. **Guidance
and Support**

